

May 1994

Clinical Center News

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Nurses' meeting set

Nurses will gather for their annual meeting on May 23, 2-4 p.m., in Masur Auditorium.

"The meeting offers our department members the opportunity to recognize individual and team excellence," says Kathryn McKeon, CC associate director for nursing. The department's top awards will be announced.

Professional poster presentations will be on display between 1-5:30 p.m. that day in the Visitor Information Center. Call Lorrie Maciag at 496-5661 for details.

Inspection underscores clinical lab's quality

The CC Clinical Pathology Department biennial accreditation inspection by the College of American Pathologists revealed no deficiencies in department labs.

Only minor recommendations concerning lab operations were noted by the team, none affecting accreditation, says Dr. Ronald Elin, department chief. Inspection teams look at lab operations such as quality controls, instrument maintenance, calibration methods, and safety issues.

"Every department member shares in this accomplishment," says Dr. Elin. "Each cares about the laboratory product we produce and strives to achieve the highest quality."

Federal law requires accreditation for hospital-based labs.



The newly opened pediatric unit on 11 East is child- and parent-friendly. Dual-height hall rails and walls filled with art are among unit features. Taking a stroll are Michael Thomas Conry and his dad, Thomas.

Renovated unit designed, staffed to meet needs of youngest patients

Doors are now open for a Clinical Center first. It's the 13-bed pediatric unit on 11 East, the first multi-institute CC unit designed and staffed especially for children.

"Children aren't simply small adults," says Clarissa Mickle, head nurse.

"They have special needs and the unit is designed to help staff members meet those needs," adds Dr. Jack Yanovski, a NICHD pediatrician who serves as the unit's acting ward chief.

Patient rooms feature creamy colored walls with pastel borders. Whimsical animal herds gallop across the plaid curtains. A playroom staffed

by play therapists is just across from the nurses' station.

"Children need a place to play," Dr. Yanovski says simply. And they work, too. "It's important to occupy children with chronic illnesses with intellectual endeavors," he explains. A CC teacher provides bedside tutoring and classroom instruction for unit patients.

A home-like family room just down the hall includes a television, microwave, and refrigerator. Comfortably furnished, it offers both a place to relax and a quiet corner for

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DTM honors volunteer commitment with May 20 festivities

In the past year they've given a collective 6,000 units of blood. Their commitment to supporting patient care and research at the Clinical Center has made the critical difference in treatments and research.

They're the donors who volunteer to give blood through the Department of Transfusion Medicine, and they're guests of honor for Donor Appreciation Day activities set for May 20.

The event will begin with an 11 a.m.-noon awards ceremony in Masur Auditorium. Robert Gray, director of the Children's Inn, will be the keynote speaker.

Volunteers who have donated for 20, 25, 30, and 35 years will be honored during the program and Hall-of-Fame-Award recipients will be announced. Hall of Fame Awards go to volunteers who have donated more than 100 units of blood.

A reception outside the Department of Transfusion Medicine will feature entertainment, games, good company, and great food.

"The event is designed to show the donors how important they are



Transfusion Medicine's Blood Donor Center will honor volunteers like Dr. Stephen Schiaffino (left) during Donor Appreciation Day festivities May 20, 11 a.m.-noon, in Masur Auditorium. Dr. Schiaffino was recently honored for his 100th blood donation. Making the presentation were (from left) Glorice Mason, medical technician, and Dr. Susan Leitman, blood services section chief.

and how much we appreciate their commitment," says Keith Redmond, donor resources supervisor.

"They are essential to carrying out the Clinical Center's research and patient-care missions," he says. "Their generosity supports much of the work here."

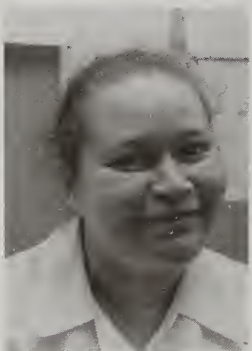
"We have a lot of patients who

really need blood and we have a lot of people who are willing to donate," adds Jacqueline Brown, donor resources assistant. Most of the current 3,000 active donors work at NIH, points out Brown, and many work at the Clinical Center.

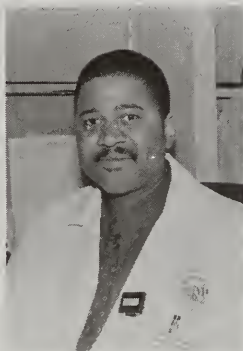
—by LaTonya Kittles

query

How do you cope with the commute?



Sheila Washington
Nutrition Department
"I catch a (D.C.) bus, then the train. I take the Red Line to the Medical Center stop, then walk up the hill."



Victor Wright
Diagnostic Radiology
"To help relieve some of the pressure, I take the local lanes of 270, then Montrose to Old Georgetown. Traffic's always moving."



Ruth Jacaruso
Voucher Office
"I cope fine. I drive a mile. It's five stop signs and three lights from my garage. It takes an hour by bus."



Gerald Hall
Clinical Pathology
"I catch the subway. It takes about 5 minutes to get to the subway if I get a ride. Then I read the newspaper."

Clinical Center News

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CCNews is published monthly by the Office of Clinical Center Communications, Colleen Henrichsen, chief, for CC employees.

News, article ideas, calendar events, letters, and photographs are welcome.

Deadline for submission is the second Monday of each month. If possible, submit your article on a Macintosh disk (Microsoft Word preferred).



System preview

A recent demonstration of a computerized patient appointment system under development for the Clinical Center drew more than 250 staffers. The preview offered users an opportunity to look at the new system's capabilities and a chance to make suggestions on how it can be adapted to meet the Clinical Center's unique needs. Next on the agenda for members of the CC committee overseeing the project is to select a pilot site for the new system. Jesse Ferguson, Outpatient Department clinic administrator, and Reggie Kilner, Information Systems Department systems analyst, co-chair the committee.

briefs

Bond drive runs through June 10

This year's national campaign for the U.S. Savings Bonds Payroll Savings Plan kicks off with ceremonies May 3 at 11:45 a.m. at the building 31A patio. The campaign runs through June 10.

The plan provides an easy way to save money. Bonds offer competitive, market-based rates, complete safety, freedom from state and local income taxes, federal income tax deferral, and exemption from federal income taxes under certain conditions.

Contact John Slovikosky, the campaign's deputy coordinator for the CC, at 496-6544 for details.

Symphony's concert benefits NIH charities

A June 5 concert by the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra will benefit Camp Fantastic and the Children's Inn. The Recreation and Welfare Association sponsors the event set for 3 p.m. in Masur Auditorium.

John Gerschefski, a local violin and viola teacher, will conduct. He is also on the music production staff for the U.S. Marine Band and has composed original works and arranged

standards for that group.

This benefit marks a new venture for the Montgomery Symphony, organizers say. Instrumentalists who attend the weekly rehearsals include music teachers, scientists, federal employees, homemakers, and retired professors.

Volunteers needed

Healthy individuals 18 and older are needed for an NIAID research study of an experimental vaccine for prevention of genital herpes. Eligible to participate are volunteers who do not themselves have genital herpes and are in a stable relationship with a partner known to have the disease. Both partners will be screened to confirm eligibility. Call 496-1836 for more confidential information.

Conference honors Cadet Nurse Corps

Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders and Kristine Gebbie, national AIDS policy coordinator, are among guest speakers on tap for the Cadet Nurse Corps Commemorative Conference May 13-14. May 13 events are in Masur Auditorium. On May 14, the program moves to the Hyatt Regency.

Lorrie Maciag, executive assistant

to the CC associate director for nursing, is the event's program chair. Sponsors are the Public Health Service and the American Nurses Association.

The conference, which will also include a panel discussion by the top nursing leaders in the federal government, commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Cadet Nurse Corps' founding. The corps was created to meet the nation's need for military and civilian nurses during World War II.

Call Maciag at 496-5661 for more information.

Blood pressure screening offered

High blood pressure is a silent menace. It can occur without signs or symptoms, and may lead to stroke, kidney damage, or heart disease.

The good news is that once high blood pressure is found, it can be controlled. Clinical Center employees can take advantage of screening programs sponsored by the Occupational Medical Service, NIH Division of Safety. Schedules and locations are posted throughout the Clinical Center. Call 496-4411 for details.

New unit designed and staffed for pediatrics

Continued from page 1

medical consultations.

"Our patients board with a parent or other care giver," Mickle points out. "Brothers and sisters can visit, along with grandparents and friends. They help support a child through illness."

There's a separate treatment room for unit patients. "The child's own room is a safe haven," Dr. Yanovski says.

The 12-member nursing staff was specially trained through a four-month orientation on the 9 West pediatric unit, Mickle notes. "It was a very specific orientation to pediatric nursing concerns, including growth, development, and medications. The 9 West nursing staff was very supportive."

As the staff pediatrician, Dr. Yanovski describes his role as consultative. "I make sure the individual treatment plan set by the attending physician is carried out. I am available to assist in any way, including emergencies."

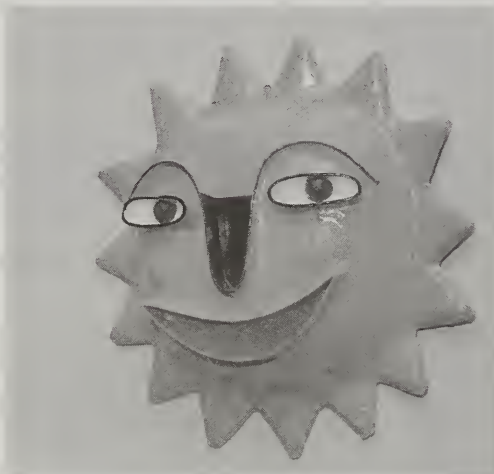
"We are here to support biomedical research," adds Mickle, who also serves as head nurse on 9 West. "The reason the unit exists is to support the care and needs of the pediatric patients. While meeting those needs, we can also meet the needs of any research protocol."

Dr. Steven Holland is an NIAID investigator who has admitted patients to the newly renovated unit. "The unit offers several advantages," he says. "It has an attending pediatrician who serves as a resource for all of us, a nursing staff committed to pediatric care, and it's physically a beautiful unit geared toward keeping children and families happy. It was designed with children and families in mind."

Child-friendly touches pop up in unexpected places. Snoopy cartoons are stamped on the paper covering the exam table in the treatment room. Colorful fish mobiles dangle from the ceiling.



Colorful mobiles decorate the unit's treatment room. Preparing for a procedure is unit nurse Susanne Blaker.



The unit is filled with art chosen by the staff with kids in mind

The staff picked out the art with kids in mind, points out Dr. Yanovski. "We don't expect children and their families to treat the hospital as home," he says. "It's not possible. But we try to do as good a job as we can to make it as comfortable as it can be."

"Walk down the hall," says Mickle, "and you'll hear children laughing."

—by Sara Rand Byars



Michael Thomas Conry shares a moment with dad, Thomas. Parents are encouraged to stay with their child during hospitalizations.



The central nurses' station is just across the hall from the game-filled playroom. Pictured are unit secretary Jan Ludwig (seated) and (from left) staff nurses Georgiana Hoover and Eileen Lange, and Dr. Jack Yanovski, acting ward chief.



The unit's playroom features shelves of games, books, and puzzles. Nurse Donna Gwyer (left) spends some "fun" time with Numan Aslam and his mother, Kausar.



Numan Aslam and his mom, Kausar, offer a little TLC to Barney. Patient rooms feature cream-colored walls and pastel borders.

Confidential access codes protect patient privacy

To decrease unauthorized access to patients' medical files, Medical Information System (MIS) access codes must be kept confidential.

"The code is like a signed check because once people have it they can do anything with it," says Bernice Crossley, chief, professional support section, Information Systems Department (ISD).

The codes allow employees involved with patient care to add, update, and retrieve vital information on CC patients.

Employees often don't realize

how important their codes are and that those codes are the user's personal signature, says Barbara Scott, nurse consultant, professional support section. "It's the key to a patient's demographic data, consults, lab results, and other information."

A common unauthorized use of codes occurs when employees leave their terminals logged on when finishing a session, and someone else uses the terminal while the initial code is still active.

Employees who are found using unauthorized codes or sharing their

own codes face disciplinary action, Crossley says, and their codes are always disabled until the supervisor is notified and the matter resolved.

To keep MIS codes confidential, ISD suggests:

- Never share your code.
- Sign off every time you leave the terminal.
- Memorize your code. Don't write it down.
- Make sure no one watches when you enter your code.

—by LaTonya Kittles



Children and Hospitals Week events

NIH firefighters (from left) Brian Padgett, Paul Donaldson, and Tommy Gibson talked about fire prevention and safety as part of Children and Hospitals Week activities. Other events included visits by Washington Bullets mascot "Hoops," Ronald McDonald and his magic act, MIX 107.3 disc jockey George Mason, and the Caring Canines. The event is sponsored by the Association for the Care of Children's Health to help the public learn more about the unique needs of children and their families in a health-care setting. CC Children and Hospitals Week committee members were Sue Alessi, Liz Berg, Charlotte Bosmans, Charles Butler, Raine Clarke, Kathryn Heath, Jay Jones, Elvera Sales, Maria Stagnitto, Linda Wheeler and Frances Byrd. Co-chairs were Kristin Johnsen and Myra Wollery-Antill.



Staff and patients on 13 West celebrated Children and Hospitals Week with face painting and ice cream. Dabbing a ray of sunshine of Casey Moore's cheek is Janine Daub, clinical nurse.

CC program a unique experience for theology students

The Spiritual Ministry Department's Clinical Pastoral Education Program offers a unique educational experience for theology students.

Students and department members work with multidisciplinary teams to offer care and support for patients and their families. "They learn to help people use their spiritual and religious beliefs to help them deal with chronic health problems," says Chaplain Karen Morrow, Spiritual Ministry Department.

Students from area seminaries take part in either the 10-week or 16-week program, learning how to work with patients in a hospital setting.

The techniques the students study while here are those they'll need when dealing with ill or hospitalized members of their own congregations later, says Morrow.

The program gives theology students insight into the special spiritual needs of patients and families facing the crisis of hospitalization.

"People in these situations have many feelings that they think are not normal," Morrow says. "Students are able to show patients that those feelings are normal."

"Working with spiritual ministry staff, students explore how to help patients use their own beliefs to find the meaning in their crisis and to find ways to cope," she adds.

Under department-member guidance, the students spend half of their time working directly with



Members of the current Clinical Pastoral Education Program and their CC supervisors are (front row from left) H.G. (Skip) McComas, Edco Bailey, and Rev. Karen Morrow and Dr. Ray Fitzgerald, Spiritual Ministry Department. In back are Marjorie Ackerman, Jack O'Brien III, Patty Toler, and Gerald Stone.

patients. "Students are mainly trying to establish a rapport with patients and families. They try to identify what the patients' spiritual resources are and help show them how they can use [such things as] prayer, rituals, and spiritual hymns and songs to deal with their problems," Morrow says.

Lectures, case presentations, and group meetings make up the other half of the curriculum. Experts from various departments, such as nursing, medicine, social work, recreation therapy, and bioethics, talk to students about different aspects of

patient care. "They help the students develop the skills necessary to communicate effectively with patients and families," says Morrow.

Patients and students often come from different faiths, Morrow explains, and the program shows students how their own view of God and of humanity influences their ministry. "Students learn how to be open to patients' beliefs even when those beliefs are different from their own," says Morrow.

—by LaTonya Kittles

Newly mandated classes focus on workplace AIDS issues

Clinical Center employees begin participating this month in a federally mandated program to learn more about issues surrounding HIV and AIDS in the workplace.

The educational program, based on a directive issued by President Clinton last fall, requires that all federal employees receive comprehensive training on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. The Office of AIDS Research and the NIH Training Center will provide

training through the Whitman-Walker Clinic, the largest local AIDS organization.

"This training centers on HIV/AIDS workplace issues," points out Dr. David Henderson, CC associate director for quality assurance and hospital epidemiology and a member of the NIH committee formed to plan the training programs. "The information is designed to complement the clinical aspects of HIV and AIDS that health-care

providers deal with daily."

"NIH has a high general awareness level about AIDS," says Dr. Jack Whitescarver, deputy director of the NIH Office of AIDS Research, the office responsible for NIH compliance with the training directive.

The education and training section, CC Office of Human Resources Management, will coordinate scheduling for Clinical Center participants through department heads.

4 **Grand Rounds**
noon-1 p.m.
Lipsett Amphitheater
Pharmacologic Studies of Stuttering, Sheila Stager, Ph.D., NIDCD;
Hyperactivity: Born to be Wild?, Alan Zametkin, M.D., NIMH

11 **Grand Rounds**
noon-1 p.m.
Lipsett Amphitheater
The Professor in Action: Richard Kopelman, M.D., Tufts New England Medical Center, challenges Robert Wittes, M.D., Ph.D., NCI, to decode cryptic clinical cases.

18 **Grand Rounds**
noon-1 p.m.
Lipsett Amphitheater
Fanconi Anemia: Novel Approaches to Treatment, Johnson Liu, M.D., NHLBI, and Christopher Walsh, M.D., CC; *Self Antigens as Vaccines for Autoimmune Disease*, Howard Dickler, M.D., NIAID

23 **Annual Nursing Meeting**
2-4 p.m.
Masur Auditorium

25 **Clinical Staff Conference**
noon-1:30 p.m.
Lipsett Amphitheater
Premature Ovarian Failure, Lawrence Nelson, M.D., NICHD, moderator



Dr. Ronald Elin is chief of the Clinical Pathology Department.

Study of magnesium earns award for Clinical Center department chief

A career-long interest in magnesium has earned a top American Association for Clinical Chemistry award for a Clinical Center department chief.

Dr. Ronald Elin, chief of the Clinical Pathology Department, will receive the Award for Outstanding Contributions to Clinical Chemistry in a Selected Area of Research at the association's annual meeting in New Orleans in July. The award is given annually to a clinical chemist who achieves "national and international status for pioneering efforts in an area of research considered fundamental to the science and is considered among the world's foremost experts in that specific discipline."

His study of magnesium, an element that works with about 300 different enzymes, began while in graduate school at the University of Minnesota. "I chose magnesium for my thesis project because so little was known about it, and I have been interested in it ever since. I've been fortunate to be able to pursue that interest clinically and experimentally."

One of the keys to magnesium is its distribution in the body, he explains. "There is less than one percent in the blood, yet the most common test for magnesium levels is

the serum magnesium concentration."

The goal, he says, is to try to develop tests that quickly and accurately indicate total body status. Advances in imaging techniques now allow investigators to measure free magnesium levels in soft tissue, information that may reflect more accurately the body's total pool of magnesium.

It's important to understand how much magnesium is enough because deficiencies have been implicated in a variety of serious health problems. Magnesium deficiencies play a role in the development of heart disease, he explains, and recent studies show that magnesium given intravenously at the time of a heart attack increases survival odds for patients. Other diseases possibly associated with too little magnesium range from arrhythmias, atherosclerosis, and hypertension to psychiatric disorders.

A diet of highly processed "fast" foods predisposes many Americans to magnesium deficiency. Certain conditions—diseases like diarrhea that reduce the body's ability to absorb fluids and nutrients and illnesses like alcoholism or diabetes that increase urinary excretions—drain the body's magnesium supply.

—by Sara Rand Byars